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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
ROBERT BLAIR.

CONTAINING
THE GRAVE;
AND
A POEM TO THE MEMORY OF MR. LAW.

To which is prefixed,
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY ROBERT ANDERSON, M. D.

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ROBERT BLAIR

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Poetical Works of Blair have been collected in the eighth volume of "The Works of the BRITISH POETS, with Prefaces Biographical and Critical, by ROBERT ANDERSON, M. D." They are reprinted separately for the accommodation of the Admirers of *The Grave*, with the Variations from the Original MS., and the Life of the Author, by Dr. Anderson,

ADVERTISEMENT

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Professor Henshaw and Captain of Boston Arsenal
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for the Advancement of the Sciences, with the
Boston Original MSS. and letters of the Author, by Dr.

THE LIFE OF BLAIR.

OF the personal history of BLAIR, few particulars are known; and those few are such as give little scope for amplification and embellishment.

The life of a country clergyman, constantly engaged in the duties of his profession, the practice of the domestic virtues, and the occupations of literature, however respectable such a character may be, can afford but slender materials for biography.

The facts stated in the present account, were communicated to the compiler of this collection, in conversation with his son Robert Blair, Esq., Solicitor-General to his Majesty for Scotland, and his cousin, the learned and amiable Dr. Blair, one of the Ministers of the High Church, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, in the University of Edinburgh.

These authorities are produced by the present writer with much pleasure ; as it gives him, at once, an opportunity of reflecting on the hereditary love of literature, and distinguished politeness of Mr. Solicitor-General: and of recording his obligations to the venerable director of his youthful studies ; whose well-established reputation can suffer no diminution from the testimony of a grateful pupil, to the merit of his “ Academical prelections,” which constitute an era in the history of Scottish literature ; nor easily receive addition from the highest praise he can bestow on his “ productions for the pulpit,” which display the powers of a wise, and the acquisitions of a cultivated mind, in recommending the spirit of a pure and enlightened religion to every order of mankind ; and exhibit to the literary world, a model of sound and elegant instruction, and of simple and persuasive eloquence, unprecedented in the history of that species of composition in our country.

Robert Blair was the eldest son of the Rev. David Blair, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and Chaplain to the King. His mother was ----- Nisbet, daughter of ----- Nisbet, Esq., of Car-

fin. His grandfather was the Rev. Robert Blair, one of the most distinguished Scottish clergymen in the time of the civil wars; a descendent of the ancient and respectable family of Blair of Blair, in Ayrshire.

He was born about the beginning of this century; had the most liberal education in the University of Edinburgh, and afterwards was sent abroad by his father for his improvement, and spent some time on the continent. After undergoing the usual trials appointed by the church, he was ordained minister of Athelstaneford, in the county of East-Lothian, January 5, 1731, where he passed the remainder of his life.

As his fortune was easy, he lived very much in the style of a gentleman, and was greatly respected by Sir Francis Kinloch, Baronet, of Gilmerton, patron of the parish, and by all the gentlemen in that neighbourhood. He was a man both of learning, and of elegant taste and manners. He was a botanist and florist, which he showed in the cultivation of his garden; and was also conversant in optical and microscopical knowledge, on which subjects he carried on correspondence with some

learned men in England. He was a man of sincere piety, and very assiduous in discharging the duties of his clerical function. As a preacher, he was serious and warm, and discovered the imagination of a poet.

He married Isabella Law, daughter of Mr. Law of Elvington, and sister to the present sheriff-depute of East-Lothian; a lady of uncommon beauty and amiable manners. With her father, who had been professor of moral philosophy, in the University of Edinburgh, who was his relation, and had been left one of his tutors, he had been long and intimately connected; and, upon occasion of his death, which happened several years before his marriage with his daughter, he wrote and printed a funeral *Poem to his Memory*, which is thought worthy of being preserved; and is accordingly inserted in this collection.

By his lady, who survived him several years, he had five sons and one daughter; of these sons, Robert Blair, Esq., of Avington, Solicitor-General to his Majesty for Scotland, is the fourth. His brother, Mr. Archibald Blair, was also a clergyman, and was settled in a parish near him in East-Lo-

thian. One of his sons, nephew to the poet, Robert Blair, M. D., is one of the Commissioners of the Sick and Wounded in London, and well known for his skill in optics and astronomy.

He died of a fever, on the 4th of February, 1746, in the 47th year of his age; and was succeeded in his living at Athelstaneford, by another poet, Mr. John Home, the celebrated author of "Douglas."

This is all that is known of Blair; an accomplished scholar, and an elegant poet, whose genius and virtue, though celebrated by some of the most eminent of his poetical contemporaries, have suffered such unmerited neglect, that his name is not to be found in any collection of literary biography.

Had the interesting correspondence of Watts been given to the world by his friend and biographer Dr. Jennings, it would probably have furnished many particulars relating to Blair, which might have gratified curiosity; though they could hardly have added to the honour which his talents and virtues have received from the esteem of a

man, who has left behind him such purity of character, and such monuments of laborious piety.

The friends of Blair were the friends of science and of virtue ; his love of poetry and polite literature, procured him the friendship of Watts, a polite scholar, and devout poet ; no less remarkable for his genius and learning, than the mildness and fervency of his piety : And his passion for natural history, obtained him the correspondence of the famous naturalist, Henry Baker, Esq., Fellow of the Royal Society, an intelligent, upright, and benevolent man, who was particularly attentive to all the improvements which were made in natural science, and very solicitous for the prosecution of useful discoveries. Besides the papers written by himself in the " Philosophical Transactions," he was the means, by his extensive correspondence, of conveying to the Society, the intelligence and observations of other inquisitive and philosophical men. Like Blair, he was both a poet and a naturalist ; and printed a volume of " Original Poems, serious and humorous," 8vo, 1725. He was the author likewise of " The Universe, a poem," which has been several times reprinted. But his princi-

pal publications are, "The Microscope made easy," 1742; and "Employment for the Microscope," which have gone through many editions, and are generally known. Having led a very useful and honourable life, he died November 25, 1774, being then above seventy years of age. By his wife Sophia, youngest daughter of the celebrated De Foe, he had a son, David Erskine Baker, Esq., author of the "Muse of Ossian;" a dramatic poem, of three acts, performed at Edinburgh, 1763; and "The Companion to the Play Muse," 2 vols., 12mo, 1764, a work that has since been considerably improved by Mr. Reed, under the title of the "Biographica Dramatica," 2 vols. 8vo, 1781. His letters to Blair, are in the possession of Mr. Solicitor-General.

With Dr. Doddridge, a man whose learning was respected by Warburton and Newton, and whose piety was venerated by Lyttleton and West, he also cultivated a correspondence; probably through the kindness of Watts, or the good offices of their common friend, Colonel James Gardiner, who was slain at the battle of Prestonpans, September 21, 1745.; and affectionately commemorated by Dr.

Doddridge, in "Some remarkable Passages in his Life," published in 1747.

The following letter, dated Athelstaneford, February 25, 1741-2, and inserted in the "Epistolary Correspondence of Dr. Doddridge," published by the Rev. Mr. Stedman of Shrewsbury, 1790, exhibits an advantageous specimen of his temper and disposition, and contains some interesting information relating to the composition and publication of *The Grave*.

"You will be justly surpris'd with a letter from one whose name is not so much as known to you: nor shall I offer to make an apology. Though I am entirely unacquainted with your person, I am no stranger to your merit as an author; neither am I altogether unacquainted with your personal character, having often heard honourable mention made of you by my much respected and worthy friends, Colonel Gardiner, and Lady Frances. About ten months ago, Lady Frances did me the favour to transmit to me some manuscript hymns of yours, with which I was wonderfully delighted. I wish I could, on my part, contribute in any measure to your entertainment, as you have sometimes

done to mine in a very high degree. And that I may show how willing I am to do so, I have desired Dr. Watts to transmit to you a manuscript poem of mine, intituled *The Grave*, written, I hope, in a way not unbecoming my profession as a minister of the gospel, though the greatest part of it was composed several years before I was clothed with so sacred a character. I was urged by some friends here, to whom I showed it, to make it public; nor did I decline it, provided I had the approbation of Dr. Watts, from whom I have received many civilities, and for whom I had ever entertained the highest regard. Yesterday I had a letter from the Doctor, signifying his approbation of the piece in a manner most obliging. A great deal less from him would have done me no small honour. But at the same time, he mentions to me that he had offered it to two bookfellers of his acquaintance, who, he tells me, did not care to run the risk of publishing it. They can scarce think (considering how critical an age we live in, with respect to such kind of writings) that a person living three hundred miles from London, could write so as to be acceptable to the fashionable and polite. Per-

haps it may be so; though, at the same time I must say, in order to make it more generally liked, I was obliged sometimes to go cross to my own inclination, well knowing, that whatever poem is written upon a serious argument, must, upon that very account, be under peculiar disadvantages; and, therefore, proper arts must be used to make such a piece go down with a licentious age, which cares for none of those things. I beg pardon for breaking in upon moments precious as yours, and hope you will be so kind as to give me your opinion of the poem."

The difficulties stated by Watts in the above letter, probably prevented the publication of *The Grave* during its author's lifetime. The earliest edition of it, which the present writer has seen, is that printed at Edinburgh, in 8vo, 1747. At the end is a translation of a pious ode of Volusenus; but of no value. The subsequent editions are too numerous to be specified. To the edition in 8vo, 1786, is added Gray's "Elegy in a Country-Church-yard," with "notes moral, critical, and explanatory." The notes are in general trifling and insipid. It is now, with the *Poem to the Me-*

memory of Mr. Law, received, for the first time, into a collection of classical English poetry.

The variations from the common editions, are printed from the original MS., 1741-2, in the possession of Mr. Solicitor-General, communicated for the use of this edition. The reading in the printed copies has in general so much the appearance of improvement, and is so consonant to the style of the poem, that it is probable it might be the result of a revision, subsequent to the date of the MS. Some verbal transpositions, of little importance, are not copied.

If Blair had written nothing else but this single poem, it is alone sufficient to entitle him to a classical distinction among the poets of our country. But the *Poem to the Memory of Mr. Law*, inserted in this collection by the favour of Dr. Blair, is no inconsiderable addition to his fame. It is evidently a juvenile performance, the tribute of affection and esteem to the merits of a friend, and justly chargeable, in some instances, with incorrectness of language, and incongruity of imagery: but the style is simple and beautiful; and the sentiments, though sometimes trite, are expressed with a ten-

derness and energy not unworthy of the author of *The Grave*. The apostrophe to Mrs. Law, in particular, is pathetic and pleasing; and the abrupt transition to the final conflagration of the universe, approaches to sublimity.

The Grave, his greatest work, amply establishes his fame. It is a production of real genius, and possesses a merit superior to many pieces of the first celebrity. It is composed of a succession of unconnected descriptions, and of reflections that seem independent of one another, interwoven with striking allusions, and digressive sallies of imagination. It is a series of pathetic representations, without unity of design, variegated with imagery and allusion; which exhibit a wide display of original poetry. The poet's eye is awake on the objects of creation, and on the scenes of human misery; and he is alive to every feeling of compassion and benevolence. Through a shade of melancholy, which peculiar impressions of religion throw over the scenes he describes, we always perceive an amiable and generous principle struggling to overcome the degeneracy which it deploras. Whatever subject is either discussed or aimed at,

he always endeavours to melt the heart, and alarm the conscience, by pathetic description and serious remonstrance; and his sentiments are always delivered in a novel and energetic manner, that impresses them strongly on the mind. He is always moral, yet never dull; and though he often expands an image, yet he never weakens its force. If the same thought occurs, he gives it a new form; and is copious without being tiresome. He writes under the strong impression of Christian and moral truths. Conviction gives force to imagination; and he dips his pen in the stream that religion has opened in his own bosom.

His imagination, excursive and vigorous, sometimes exceeds the bounds that criticism prescribes. Possessing strong powers of ridicule as well as fancy, he passes too suddenly from grave and serious description, to irony and satire. Instances of this improper association too frequently occur, and the grave and ludicrous destroy one another.

But the defects of *The Grave* bear a very small proportion to its beauties; and its beauties are of no common account. They are happily conceived and forcibly expressed. His language is the

natural and unforced result of his conceptions. Anxious only to give each image its due prominence and relief, he has wasted no unnecessary attention on grace or embellishment; the diction, therefore, though seldom splendid, is always vigorous and animated, and carries the thought home to the heart with inexpressible energy. His versification is almost as singular as the materials upon which it is employed; sometimes careless and profane, and sometimes strikingly elegant and harmonious; resembling sometimes the best manner of Shakspeare and Rowe, and sometimes that of Milton and Young; but without any marks of servile imitation. Amidst such a profusion of beautiful and striking passages as are to be found in this singular poem, it is difficult to confirm these general remarks by particular quotations.

After a solemn introduction, the following striking passage appears :

The wind is up : hark ! how it howls ! Methinks
 Till now I never heard a sound so dreary :
 Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul bird,
 Rook'd in the spire, screams loud : the gloomy ailes
 Black plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of
 'scutcheons

And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound
 Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults, [bers,
 The mansions of the dead---Rous'd from their slum-
 In grim array the grisly spectres rise,
 Grin horrible, and obstinately fullen,
 Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of night.
 Again the screech-owl shrieks : ungracious sound !
 I'll hear no more ; it makes one's blood run chill.

The following picture is very fine and natural :

Oft in the lone church-yard, at night, I've seen,
 By glimpse of moon-shine chequering through the
 trees,
 The school-boy with his satchel in his hand,
 Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,
 And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,
 (With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown)
 That tell in homely phrase who lie below.
 Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,
 The sound of something purring at his heels :
 Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
 Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows ;
 Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
 Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
 That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
 O'er some new-open'd grave ; and (strange to tell)
 Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

This pleasing picture is finely contrasted by the
 affecting one which immediately follows it :

The new-made widow———
 Sad fight ! flow moving o'er the prostrate dead;
 Lifeless she crawls along in doleful black,
 While bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,
 Fast falling down her now untasted cheek.
 Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man
 She drops ; whilst busy meddling memory,
 In barbarous succession musters up
 The past endearments of their softer hours,
 Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks
 She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,
 Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf ;
 Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way.

In the above description there are many minute strokes, *her now untasted cheek---busy meddling memory, &c.* which mark the superior poet.

From the apostrophe to *Friendship*, which immediately follows, the heart catches sympathetic feelings ; and the amiable poet leaves on it the impression of all that is tender, generous, and endearing. There is beautiful description, and much poetical enthusiasm in the following lines.

———Oh ! when my friend and I
 In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,
 Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
 Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,
 Where the pure limpid stream has slid along

In grateful errors through the under-wood,
Sweet murmuring ; methought the shrill-tongu'd
thrush

Mended his song of love ; the sooty blackbird
Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note :
The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose
Assum'd a dye more deep ; whilst ev'ry flower
Vied with its fellow plant in luxury
Of drefs——Oh ! then, the longest summer's day
Seem'd too, too much in haste : still the full heart
Had not imparted half : 'twas happiness
Too exquisite to last.————

The following passage strongly reminds us of
Shakspeare, and is equal to any of the most ad-
mired moral parts of that wonderful dramatist.

Dull grave ! thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,
Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,
And ev'ry smirking feature from the face ;
Branding our laughter with the name of madness.
Where are the jesters now ? the men of health
Complexionally pleasant ? Where the droll,
Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke
To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,
And made ev'n thick-lip'd musing melancholy
To gather up her face into a smile
Before she was aware ? Ah ! fullen now,
And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

The description of a funeral, beginning, *But see the well-plum'd berse*, &c. has the beauties and defects of the same admirable writer. The apostrophe to *Beauty* is a masterly passage; as are those on the death of the *Strong Man*, the *Philosopher*, and the *Physician*. This expression in the last reminds us of Milton:

—————From stubborn shrubs
Thou wring'st their shy retiring virtues out,
And vex'd them in the fire—————

The *Sexton* will be readily recognised as a relation of the grave-digger in Hamlet.

—————hoary-headed chronicle,
Of hard unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole
A gentle tear; with mattock in his hand
Digst through whole rows of kindred and acquaintance,
By far his juniors.——Scarce a skull's cast up,
But well he knew its owner, and can tell
Some passage of his life.—————

The following comparison applied to time, is happily imagined.

Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief,
Who slides his hand under the miser's pillow,
And carries off his prize—————

The hand of Shakspeare could not possibly have gone higher, or have touched a situation with greater nicety.

Few similes can exceed the following for elegant simplicity. Among the various tenants of the grave, he enumerates

———The long-demurring maid,
Whose lonely unappropriated sweets
Smil'd, like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,
Not to be come at by the willing hand.

Another simile, near the end of the poem, where he mentions the aversion even of the good to death, beginning, *So have I seen upon a summer's eve*, is natural and striking.

In Blair, it is difficult to discover any material traces of imitation, or even to conjecture who were his favourites among the poets of his country. His style of composition is his own, and his versification peculiar to himself. He undoubtedly, however, possessed a taste for our elder poets, the *ancient wells of English undefiled*, from whom he probably learned the energy, character, and truth of composition, and the genuine language of verse;

particularly the frequent use of compound epithets, which are the life of a language, and in which our own is far from being deficient.

Blair, describing the death of a good man, says:

By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away,
Yet like the sun seems larger at his setting.

The last line is evidently borrowed from Quarles; a writer of true poetical genius, and of exemplary virtue, unjustly neglected:

Brave minds oppress'd, should (in dispiht of fate)
Looke greatest (like the sunne) in lowest state.—

Job. Milt.

The testimonies to the merits of Blair are few, when compared with his deserts. *The Grave*, though it is written in a style that might well delight the learned, and deserve the attention of the writers of verse, yet has never been mentioned, till very lately, in any critical work, nor imitated in any poetical composition. "The Task" of Cowper, an ingenious and truly original performance, resembles it only in the singular combination of pathetic description, comic humour, and

serious remonstrance. Its popularity, however, must be allowed as an unquestionable authority in its favour; for by the judgment of the common, unprejudiced, unpedantic reader, the merit of every poetical composition must be ultimately decided.

Mr. Pinkerton, the learned and ingenious editor of the "Ancient Scottish Poems," &c. was the first who celebrated the merits of Blair, and subjected *The Grave* to the examination of criticism; which, though somewhat too general and indiscriminate, merits attention.

"I know not," says Mr. Pinkerton, "that he wrote any thing else; but *The Grave* is worth a thousand common poems. The language is such as Shakspeare would have used; yet he no where imitates Shakspeare, or uses any expression of his. It is frugal and chaste; yet, upon occasion, highly poetical, without any appearance of research. It is unquestionably the best piece of blank verse we have, save those of Milton."

his own resistance. It is possible, however, that he should be regarded as an independent authority in his own right; for by the judgment of the common unprejudiced, unpartial reader, the merit of every poetical composition must be ultimately decided.

Mr. Pinkerton, the learned and ingenious editor of the "Ancient Scottish Poems," &c. was the first who estimated the merits of Blake, and subjected the State to the examination of criticism; which, though somewhat too general and indiscriminate, attracted attention.

"I know not," says Mr. Pinkerton, "that he wrote any thing else; but the State is worth a thousand common poems. The language is such as Shakspeare would have used; yet he no where imitates Shakspeare, nor does any expression of his. It is singular and chosen; yet upon occasion, justly poetical without any appearance of affectedness. It is unquestionably the best piece of blank verse we have, the choice of Milton." "I know not," says Mr. Pinkerton, "that he wrote any thing else; but the State is worth a thousand common poems. The language is such as Shakspeare would have used; yet he no where imitates Shakspeare, nor does any expression of his. It is singular and chosen; yet upon occasion, justly poetical without any appearance of affectedness. It is unquestionably the best piece of blank verse we have, the choice of Milton." "I know not," says Mr. Pinkerton, "that he wrote any thing else; but the State is worth a thousand common poems. The language is such as Shakspeare would have used; yet he no where imitates Shakspeare, nor does any expression of his. It is singular and chosen; yet upon occasion, justly poetical without any appearance of affectedness. It is unquestionably the best piece of blank verse we have, the choice of Milton."

THE GRAVE.

THE HOUSE APPOINTED FOR ALL LIVING.—JOB.

WHILST some affect the sun, and some the shade,
Some flee the city, some the hermitage ;
Their aims as various as the roads they take
In journeying through life ;---the task be mine
To paint the gloomy horrors of the tomb ;
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all
These travellers meet.—Thy succours I implore,
Eternal King ! whose potent arm sustains
The keys of hell and death,——The grave, dread
thing !

9

Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd : Nature appall'd,
Shakes off her wonted firmness.—Ah ! how dark
Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes !
Where nought but silence reigns, and night, dark
night,

Dark as was chaos, ere the infant fun
 Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
 Athwart the gloom profound.—The sickly taper
 By glimm'ring through thy low-brow'd misty vaults,
 (Furr'd round with mouldy damp, and ropy slime)
 Lets fall a supernumerary horror, 19
 And only serves to make thy night more irksome.
 Well do I know thee by thy trusty yew,
 Cheerless unsocial plant, that loves to dwell
 'Midst skulls and coffins, epitaphs, and worms :
 Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,
 Beneath the wan cold moon (as fame reports)
 Embod'y'd, thick, perform their mystic rounds.
 No other merriment, dull tree, is thine.

See yonder hallow'd fane ;—the pious work
 Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot, 29
 And bury'd 'midst the wreck of things which were ;

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 21. Methinks I know thee, &c.

29. Of those that liv'd some hundred years ago ;

Where lie interr'd the more illustrious dead,

The wind is up, &c.

There lie interr'd the more illustrious dead.

The wind is up: hark! how it howls! Methinks
Till now I never heard a sound so dreary: [bird,
Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul
Rook'd in the spire, screams loud: the gloomy ailes
Black plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of
'scutcheons

And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound
Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,
The mansions of the dead.—Rous'd from their
slumbers,

In grim array the grisly spectres rise, 40
Grin horrible, and obstinately fullen,
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of night.
Again the screech-owl shrieks: ungracious sound!
I'll hear no more; it makes one's blood run chill.

Quite round the pile, a row of reverend elms,
(Coeval near with that) all ragged show,
Long lash'd by the rude winds. Some rift half down
Their branchless trunks; others so thin a-top,
That scarce two crows could lodge in the same tree.
Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd
here: 50

Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs :
 Dead men have come again, and walk'd about ;
 And the great bell has toll'd, unring, untouch'd.
 (Such tales their cheer at wake or gossiping,
 When it draws near the witching time of night.)

Oft in the lone church-yard at night I've seen,
 By glimpse of moon-shine chequering through the
 trees,

The school-boy, with his satchel in his hand,
 Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,
 And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones, 60
 (With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown),
 That tell in homely phrase who lie below.

Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,
 The sound of something purring at his heels ;
 Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
 Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows ;
 Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
 Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
 That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand 69
 O'er some new-open'd grave ; and (strange to tell!)

VARIATION.

68. Of horrid apparition, strait and tall.

Evanesces at crowing of the cock.

The new-made widow, too, I've sometimes 'spy'd,
 Sad sight ! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead :
 Lifeless, she crawls along in doleful black,
 Whilst bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,
 Fast falling down her now untasted cheek.
 Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man
 She drops ; whilst busy meddling memory,
 In barbarous succession musters up
 The past endearments of their softer hours, 80
 Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks
 She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,
 Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,
 Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way.
 Invidious grave !—how dost thou rend in sunder
 Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one ?
 A tie more stubborn far than nature's band.
 Friendship ! mysterious cement of the soul ;
 Sweetner of life, and folder of society, 89

VARIATION.

85. Invidious grave ! thou separat'st chief friends
 That love has bound, &c.

I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me
Far far beyond what I can ever pay.

Oft have I prov'd the labours of thy love,
And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,
Anxious to please.—Oh ! when my friend and I
In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,
Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,
Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
In grateful errors through the under-wood,
Sweet murmuring ; methought the shrill-tongu'd
thrush

100

Mended his song of love ; the footy black-bird
Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note :
The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose
Assum'd a dye more deep ; whilst ev'ry flower
Vied with its fellow plant in luxury
Of dress.-----Oh ! then the longest summer's day
Seem'd too, too much in haste : still the full heart
Had not imparted half : 'twas happiness
Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed,
Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

109

Dull grave---thou spoil'st the dance of youthful
blood,

Strik'ft out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,
And ev'ry fmirking feature from the face ;
Branding our laughter with the name of madnefs.
Where are the jesters now ? the men of health
Complexionally pleafant ? Where the droll,
Whofe ev'ry look and gefture was a joke
To clapping theatres and fhouting crowds,
And made ev'n thick-lip'd mufing melancholy
To gather up her face into a fmile 120
Before fhe was aware ? Ah ! fullen now,
And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

Where are the mighty thunderbolts of war ?
The Roman Cæfars, and the Grecian chiefs,
The boast of ftory ? Where the hot-brain'd youth ;
Who the tiara at his pleafure tore
From kings of all the then difcover'd globe ;
And cry'd, forfooth, becaufe his arm was hamper'd,
And had not room enough to do its work ?
Alas ! how flim, difhonourably flim, 130
And cramm'd into a fpace we blufh to name !
Proud royalty ! how alter'd in thy looks !
How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue !
Son of the morning ! whither art thou gone !
Where haft thou hid thy many-spangled head,

And the majestic menace of thine eyes
Felt from afar? Pliant and powerless now,
Like new-born infant wound up in his swathes,
Or victim tumbled flat upon his back,
That throbs beneath the sacrificer's knife. 148
Mute, must thou bear the strife of little tongues,
And coward insults of the base-born crowd;
That grudge a privilege thou never hadst,
But only hop'd for in the peaceful grave,
Of being unmolested and alone.
Arabia's gums and odoriferous drugs,
And honours by the herald duly paid
In mode and form, ev'n to a very scruple;
Oh cruel irony! these come too late; 149
And only mock, whom they were meant to honour.
Surely there's not a dungeon slave that's bury'd
In the high-way, unshrouded and uncoffin'd,
But lies as soft, and sleeps as sound as he.
Sorry pre-eminence of high descent,
Above the baser born, to rot in state.

But see! the well-plum'd herse comes nodding on,
Stately and slow; and properly attended
By the whole sable tribe, that painful watch
The sick man's door, and live upon the dead,

By letting out their persons by the hour, 160
 To mimic sorrow, when the heart's not sad.
 How rich the trappings! now they're all unfurl'd,
 And glittering in the sun; triumphant entries
 Of conquerors, and coronation-pomps,
 In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people
 Retard th' unwieldy show; whilst from the case-
 ments

And houses tops, ranks behind ranks close wedg'd
 Hang bellying o'er. But tell us, why this waste,
 Why this ado in earthing up a carcase
 That's fall'n into disgrace, and in the nostril 170
 Smells horrible? ---Ye undertakers, tell us,
 'Midst all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,
 Why is the principal conceal'd, for which
 You make this mighty stir.-----'Tis wisely done:
 What would offend the eye in a good picture,
 The painter casts discreetly into shades.

Proud lineage, now how little thou appear'st
 Below the envy of the private man.
 Honour, that meddlesome officious ill 179

VARIATION.

178. Why hide the punished, for sake of which.

Pursues thee ev'n to death ; nor there stops short.
 Strange persecution ! when the grave itself
 Is no protection from rude sufferance.

Abfurd to think to over-reach the grave,
 And from the wreck of names to refcure ours.
 The beft concerted fchemes men lay for fame,
 Die faft away : only themfelves die fafter.
 The far-fam'd fculptor, and the laurell'd bard,
 Thefe bold infurancers of deathlefs fame,
 Supply their little feeble aids in vain.
 The tapering pyramid, th' Egyptian's pride, 190
 And wonder of the world, whose fpiky top
 Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv'd
 The angry fhaking of the winter's ftorm ;
 Yet fpent at laft by th' injuries of heaven,
 Shatter'd with age, and furrow'd o'er with years,
 The myftic cone with hieroglyphics crufted,
 At once gives way. Oh ! lamentable fight :
 The labour of whole ages lumbers down,
 A hideous and mif-shapen length of ruins.
 Sepulchral columns wreftle, but in vain, 200

 VARIATION.

195. Dodder'd with age, &c.

With all-subduing time : her cank'ring hand
With calm delib'rate malice wasteth them :
Worn on the edge of days the brass consumes,
The busto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,
Unsteady to the steel, give up its charge.
Ambition, half convicted of her folly,
Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale.

Here all the mighty troublers of the earth, 208
Who swam to sov'reign rule through seas of blood ;
Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying villains,
Who ravag'd kingdoms, and laid empires waste,
And in a cruel wantonness of power
Thinn'd states of half their people, and gave up
To want the rest ; now, like a storm that's spent,
Lie hush'd, and meanly sneak behind the covert.
Vain thought ! to hide them from the gen'ral scorn
That haunts and dogs them like an injur'd ghost
Implacable.-----Here too the petty tyrant,
Whose scant domains geographer ne'er notic'd, 219
And, well for neighbouring grounds, of arm as short,
Who fix'd his iron talons on the poor,
And gripp'd them like some lordly beast of prey ;
Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing hunger,
And piteous plaintive voice of misery ;

(As if a slave was not a shred of nature,
 Of the same common nature with his lord) ;
 Now tame and humble, like a child that's whipp'd,
 Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his
 kinsman ;

Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Under ground
 Precedency's a jest ; vassal and lord, 230
 Grossly familiar, side by side consume,

When self-esteem, or others adulation,
 Would cunningly persuade us we were something
 Above the common level of our kind, [t'ry,
 The grave gainsays the smooth complexion'd flat-
 And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are.

Beauty—thou pretty play-thing, dear deceit,
 That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,
 And gives it a new pulse, unknown before, 239
 The grave discredits thee : thy charms expung'd,
 Thy roses faded, and thy lilies foil'd,
 What hast thou more to boast of? Will thy lovers
 Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee ho-
 mage?

VARIATION.

239. *Not in MS.*

Methinks I see thee with thy head low laid,
 Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheek
 The high fed worm, in lazy volumes roll'd,
 Riots unscar'd.—For this, was all thy caution?

For this, thy painful labours at thy glass? 248

T' improve those charms, and keep them in re-
 pair, [feeder,

For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul
 Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,
 And leave as keen a relish on the sense.

Look how the fair one weeps!—the conscious tears
 Stand thick as dew-drops on the bells of flow'rs:
 Honest effusion! the swol'n heart in vain
 Works hard to put a gloss on its distress.

Strength too---thou surly, and less gentle boast
 Of those that loud laugh at the village ring;
 A fit of common sickness pulls thee down
 With greater ease, than e'er thou did'st the strip-
 ling 260

That rashly dar'd thee to th' unequal fight.
 What groan was that I heard? deep groan indeed!
 With anguish heavy laden; let me trace it:
 From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,
 By stronger arm belabour'd, gasps for breath

Like a hard-hunted beast. How his great heart
 Beats thick ! his roomy chest by far too scant
 To give the lungs full play.---What now avail
 The strong-built finewy limbs, and well-spread
 shoulders?

See how he tugs for life, and lays about him, 270
 Mad with his pain !---Eager he catches hold
 Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,
 Just like a creature drowning ; hideous fight !
 Oh ! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly !
 While the distemper's rank and deadly venom
 Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,
 And drinks his marrow up.---Heard you that
 groan?

It was his last.---See how the great Goliath,
 Just like a child that brawl'd itself to rest,
 Lies still.—What mean'st thou then, O mighty
 boaster, 280

To vaunt of nerves of thine ! what means the bull,
 Unconscious of his strength, to play the coward,
 And flee before a feeble thing like man ;
 That, knowing well the slackness of his arm,
 Trusts only in the well-invented knife ?

With study pale, and midnight vigils spent,
The star-surveying fage close to his eye
Applies the sight-invigorating tube;
And travelling through the boundless length of
space,

Marks well the courses of the far-seen orbs 290
That roll with regular confusion there,
In ecstacy of thought. But ah! proud man,
Great heights are hazardous to the weak head;
Soon, very soon thy firmest footing fails;
And down thou dropp'st into that darksome place,
Where nor device nor knowledge ever came.

Here, the tongue-warrior lies disabled now,
Disarm'd, dishonour'd, like a wretch that's gagg'd,
And cannot tell his ails to passers by.

Great man of language,—whence this mighty
change, 300

This dumb despair, and drooping of the head?
Though strong persuasion hung upon thy lip,
And sly insinuation's softer arts
In ambush lay about thy flowing tongue;
Alas! how chop-fall'n now! Thick mists and silence
Rest, like a weary cloud, upon thy breast
Unceasing.—Ah! where is the lifted arm,

The strength of action, and the force of words,
 The well-turn'd period, and the well-tun'd voice,
 With all the lesser ornaments of phrase? 310

Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been,
 Raz'd from the book of fame: or, more provoking,
 Perchance some hackney hunger-bitten scribbler
 Insults thy memory, and blots thy tomb
 With long flat narrative, or duller rhymes,
 With heavy halting pace that drawl along :
 Enough to rouse a dead man into rage,
 And warm with red resentment the wan cheek.

Here the great masters of the healing art,
 These mighty mock defrauders of the tomb, 320
 Spite of their juleps and catholicons,
 Resign to fate.—Proud Æsculapius' son !
 Where are thy boasted implements of art,
 And all thy well-cramm'd magazines of health ?
 Nor hill nor vale, as far as ship could go,
 Nor margin of the gravel-bottom'd brook,
 Escap'd thy rifling hand ;—from stubborn shrubs
 Thou wrung'st their shy-retiring virtues out,
 And vex'd them in the fire : nor fly nor insect,
 Nor writhy snake, escap'd thy deep research. 330
 But why this apparatus? why this cost?

Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the grave,
 Where are thy recipes and cordials now,
 With the long list of vouchers for thy cures?
 Alas? thou speakest not.—The bold impostor
 Looks not more silly, when the cheat's found out.

Here the lank-fided miser, worst of felons,
 Who meanly stole (discreditable shift)
 From back, and belly too, their proper cheer,
 Eas'd of a tax it irk'd the wretch to pay 340
 To his own carcase; now lies cheaply lodg'd,
 By clam'rous appetites no longer teas'd,
 Nor tedious bills of charges and repairs.
 But ah! where are his rents, his comings in?
 Ay! now you've made the rich man poor indeed;
 Robb'd of his gods, what has he left behind?
 Oh curst lust of gold; when for thy sake,
 The fool throws up his interest in both worlds: 348
 First starv'd in this, then damn'd in that to come.

How shocking must thy summons be, O death!
 To him that is at ease in his possessions;

VARIATIONS.

341. ——— now he lodgeth cheap.

349. Quite starv'd in this, and damn'd, &c.

Who counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come?
In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain!—How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might she stay, to wash away her stains, 369
And fit her for her passage.—Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood;—and every groan
She heaves is big with horror.—But the foe,
Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

Sure 'tis a serious thing to die! my soul, 369
What a strange moment must it be, when near
Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view!
That awful gulf no mortal e'er repass'd
To tell what's doing on the other side.
Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight,
And every life-string bleeds at thoughts of parting;

For part they must: body and soul must part;
Fond couple; link'd more close than wedded pair.
This wings its way to its Almighty source,
The witness of its actions, now its judge;
That drops into the dark and noisome grave, 380
Like a disabled pitcher of no use.

If death were nothing, and nought after death;
If when men dy'd, at once they ceas'd to be,
Returning to the barren womb of nothing,
Whence first they sprung, then might the debauchee
Untrembling mouth the heavens:—then might
the drunkard

Reel over his full bowl, and, when 'tis drain'd,
Fill up another to the brim, and laugh
At the poor bugbear death:—then might the
wretch

That's weary of the world, and tir'd of life, 390
At once give each inquietude the slip,
By stealing out of being when he pleas'd,
And by what way, whether by hemp or steel;
Death's thousand doors stand open.—Who could
force

The ill pleas'd guest to sit out his full time,
Or blame him if he goes?—Sure he does well,

That helps himself as timely as he can,
 When able.—But if there's an hereafter;
 And that there is, conscience, uninfluenc'd
 And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man; 400
 Then must it be an awful thing to die:
 More horrid yet to die by one's own hand.
 Self-murder!—name it not: our island's shame,
 That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states.
 Shall nature, swerving from her earliest dictate,
 Self-preservation, fall by her own act?
 Forbid it Heaven.—Let not, upon disgust,
 The shameless hand be fully crimson'd o'er
 With blood of its own lord.—Dreadful attempt!

VARIATION.

404. That makes her hooted at: shall the foul hand,
 Acting the traitor's part, be crimson'd o'er
 With blood of its own lord? Forbid it, Heaven!
 Shall nature, swerving from her first com-
 mand,
 Be her own butcher? shall we on disgust,
 Presume to set ourselves at liberty
 Without once asking leave? Dreadful at-
 tempt, &c.

Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage, 410
 To rush into the presence of our Judge;
 As if we challeng'd him to do his worst,
 And matter'd not his wrath!—Unheard-of tortures
 Must be reserv'd for such: these herd together;
 The common damn'd shun their society,
 And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.
 Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd;
 How long, how short, we know not:—this we
 know,

Duty requires we calmly wait the summons, 419
 Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission:
 Like sent'ries that must keep their destin'd stand,
 And wait th' appointed hour, till they're reliev'd.
 Those only are the brave that keep their ground,
 And keep it to the last. To run away
 Is but a coward's trick: to run away
 From this world's ills, that at the very worst
 Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves,
 By boldly vent'ring on a world unknown,
 And plunging headlong in the dark;—'tis mad;
 No frenzy half so desperate as this. 430

Tell us, ye dead; will none of you, in pity
 To those you left behind, disclose the secret?

Oh! that some courteous ghost would blab it out;
 What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.
 I've heard, that souls departed, have sometimes
 Forewarn'd men of their death;—'Twas kindly
 done

To knock and give the alarm.—But what means
 This stinted charity?—'Tis but lame kindness
 That does its work by halves—Why might you not
 Tell us what 'tis to die? Do the strict laws 440
 Of your society forbid your speaking
 Upon a point so nice?—I'll ask no more:
 Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine
 Enlightens but yourselves. Well, 'tis no matter;
 A very little time will clear up all,
 And make us learn'd as you are, and as close.

Death's shafts fly thick:—Here falls the village-
 swain,

And there his pamper'd lord.—The cup goes round;
 And who so artful as to put it by!
 'Tis long since death had the majority; 450
 Yet strange! the living lay it not to heart.
 See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,
 The sexton, hoary-headed chronicle,
 Of hard unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole

A gentle fear ; with mattock in his hand
Digs through whole rows of kindred and acquaint-
ance,

By far his juniors.-----Scarce a skull's cast up,
But well he knew its owner, and can tell 458
Some passage of his life.-----Thus hand in hand
The sot has walk'd with death twice twenty years;
And yet ne'er yonker on the green laughs louder,
Or clubs a smuttier tale :---When drunkards meet,
None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand
More willing to his cup.---Poor wretch! he minds
not,

That soon some trusty brother of the trade
Shall do for him what he has done for thousands.

On this side, and on that, men see their friends
Drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out
Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers
In the world's hale and undegen'rate days 470
Could scarce have leisure for.-----Fools that we are,
Never to think of death and of ourselves
At the same time : as if to learn to die
Were no concern of ours.---Oh! more than sottish,
For creatures of a day, in gamesome mood
To frolic on eternity's dread brink

Unapprehensive ; when, for ought we know,
 The very first swol'n surge shall sweep us in.
 Think we, or think we not, time hurries on,
 With a resistless unremitting stream ; 480
 Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight-thief,
 That slides his hand under the miser's pillow,
 And carries off his prize.-----What is this world?
 What? but a spacious burial-field unwall'd,
 Strew'd with death's spoils, the spoils of animals
 Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.
 The very turf on which we tread once liv'd ;
 And we that live must lend our carcases
 To cover our own offspring : In their turns 489
 They too must cover theirs.-----'Tis here all meet,
 The shiv'ring Iceland, and sunburn'd Moor ;
 Men of all climes, that never met before ;
 And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.
 Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder,
 His sov'reign's keeper, and the people's scourge,
 Are huddled out of sight.-----Here lie abash'd
 The great negotiators of the earth,

VARIATION.

493. And of all creeds, Jew, Turk, and Christian.

And celebrated masters of the balance,
Deep read in stratagems, and wiles of courts.
Now vain their treaty-skill :-----Death scorns to
treat ;

Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burden
From his gall'd shoulders ;---and when the stern
tyrant,

With all his guards and tools of power about him,
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
Mocks his short arm,---and quick as thought escapes
Where tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.

Here the warm lover, leaving the cool shade,
The tell-tale echo, and the babbling stream,
(Time out of mind the fav'rite seats of love),
Fast by his gentle mistress lays him down, 510
Unblasted by foul tongue.-----Here friends and foes
Lie close ; unmindful of their former feuds.

The lawn-rob'd prelate and plain presbyter,
E'er while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,
Familiar mingle here, like sister streams

VARIATIONS.

499. Deep read in stratagem, and statesmen's wiles,
510. Fast by his mistress' side now lies him down.

That some rude interposing rock has split.
 Here is the large-limb'd peasant :---Here the child
 Of a span long, that never saw the sun,
 Nor press'd the nipple, strangled in life's porch. 519
 Here is the mother, with her sons and daughters :
 The barren wife, and long demurring-maid,
 Whose lonely unappropriated sweets
 Smil'd like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,
 Not to be come at by the willing hand.
 Here are the prude, severe, and gay coquette,
 The sober widow, and the young green virgin,
 Cropp'd like a rose before 'tis fully blown,
 Or half its worth disclos'd. Strange medley here!
 Here garrulous old age winds up his tale;
 And jovial youth, of lightsome vacant heart, 530
 Whose ev'ry-day was made of melody,
 Hears not the voice of mirth,----The shrill-tongu'd
 shrew,
 Meek as the turtle-dove forgets her chiding.

 VARIATIONS.

519. Nor press'd the nipple, founder'd in life's porch.
 520. Here is the joyful mother of sons and daughters.
 525. Here are the prude, and frolicsome coquette.

Here are the wise, the generous, and the brave;
 The just, the good, the worthless, and profane,
 The downright clown, and perfectly well-bred;
 The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean;
 The supple statesmen, and the patriot stern;
 The wrecks of nations, and the spoils of time,
 With all the lumber of six thousand years. 540

Poor man!--how happy once in thy first state!
 When yet but warm from thy great Maker's hand,
 He stamp'd thee with his image, and, well-pleas'd,
 Smil'd on his last fair work.---Then all was well.
 Sound was the body, and the soul serene;
 Like two sweet instruments, ne'er out of tune,
 That play their several parts.---Nor head, nor heart,
 Offer'd to ache: nor was there cause they should;
 For all was pure within: no fell remorse,
 Nor anxious castings-up of what might be, 550
 Alarm'd his peaceful-bosom.---Summer seas
 Show not more smooth, when kiss'd by southern
 winds

 VARIATION.

549. to 553. *Not in MS.*

Just ready to expire---scarce importun'd,
 The generous foil, with a luxurious hand,
 Offer'd the various produce of the year,
 And ev'ry thing most perfect in its kind.
 Blessed! thrice blessed days!---But ah! how short!
 Bless'd as the pleasing dreams of holy men;
 But fugitive like those, and quickly gone. 559
 Oh! flipp'ry state of things,---What sudden turns!
 What strange vicissitudes in the first leaf
 Of man's sad history!-----To-day most happy,
 And ere to-morrow's sun has set, most abject.
 How scant the space between these vast extremes!
 Thus far'd it with our fire:---Not long h' enjoy'd
 His paradise.---Scarce had the happy tenant
 Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets,
 Or sum them up, when strait he must be gone,
 Ne'er to return again.-----And must he go? 569
 Can nought compound for the first dire offence
 Of erring man?-----Like one that is condemn'd,

VARIATION.

554. Whilst the rich gen'rous foil, scarce importun'd,
 Offer'd its various produce, &c,

Fain would he trifle time with idle talk,
 And parley with his fate.-----But 'tis in vain.
 Not all the lavish odours of the place,
 Offer'd in incense, can procure his pardon,
 Or mitigate his doom.-----A mighty angel,
 With flaming sword, forbids his longer stay,
 And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take
 One last and farewell round.---At once he lost
 His glory, and his God.---If mortal now, 580
 And sorely maim'd, no wonder.—Man has sinn'd.
 Sick of his bliss, and bent on new adventures,
 Evil he would needs try: nor try'd in vain.
 (Dreadful experiment! destructive measure!
 Where the worst thing could happen, is success.)
 Alas! too well he sped:---the good he scorn'd
 Stalk'd off reluctant, like an ill-us'd ghost,
 Not to return;---or if it did, its visits,
 Like those of angels, short and far between: 589
 Whilst the black demon, with his hell scap'd
 train,
 Admitted once into its better room,

VARIATION.

587. Stalk'd like a discontented ghost away.

Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone ;
Lording it o'er the man : who now too late
Saw the rash error, which he could not mend :
An error fatal not to him alone,
But to his future sons, his fortune's heirs.
Inglorious bondage !---Human nature groans
Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,
And its vast body bleeds through ev'ry vein. 599

What havock hast thou made, foul monster, sin !
Greatest and first of ills.---The fruitful parent
Of woes of all dimensions!---But for thee
Sorrow had never been.---All-noxious thing,
Of vilest nature!---Other sorts of evils
Are kindly circumscrib'd, and have their bounds.
The fierce volcano, from his burning entrails,
That belches molten stone and globes of fire,
Involv'd in pitchy clouds of smoke and stench,
Mars the adjacent fields for some leagues round,
And there it stops.---The big-swoln inundation,
Of mischief more diffusive, raving loud, 611
Buries whole tracks of country, threat'ning more ;
But that too has its shore it cannot pass.
More dreadful far than those ! sin has laid waste,
Not here and there a country, but a world :

Dispatching at a wide-extended blow
 Entire mankind ; and, for their sakes, defacing
 A whole creation's beauty with rude hands ;
 Blasting the foodful grain and loaded branches,
 And marking all along its way with ruin. 620
 Accursed thing !---Oh ! where shall fancy find
 A proper name to call thee by, expressive
 Of all thy horrors ?---Pregnant womb of ills !
 Of temper so transcendently malign,
 That toads and serpents, of most deadly kind,
 Compar'd to thee, are harmless.---Sickneſſes
 Of every ſize and ſymptom, racking pains,
 And blueſt plagues are thine.---See how the fiend
 Profuſely ſcatters the contagion round !
 Whiſt deep mouth'd ſlaughter, bellowing at her
 heels, 630
 Wades deep in blood new-ſpilt ; yet for to-
 morrow
 Shapes out new work of great uncommon daring,
 And inly pines till the dread blow is ſtruck.

 VARIATIONS.

616. At once diſpatching wholeſale at a blow.

623. Of thy intrinsic filth ! Big-bellied ill !

But hold, I've gone too far; too much discover'd
 My father's nakedness, and nature's shame.
 Here let me pause, and-drop an honest tear,
 One burst of filial duty and condolence,
 O'er all those ample deserts death hath spread,
 This chaos of mankind.---O great man-eater!
 Whose ev'ry day is carnival, not fated yet! 640
 Unheard-of Epicure! without a fellow!
 The veriest gluttons do not always cram;
 Some intervals of abstinence are sought
 To edge the appetite; Thou seekest none.
 Methinks the countless swarms thou hast devour'd,
 And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,
 This, less than this, might gorge thee to the full.
 But ah! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more:
 Like one, whole days defrauded of his meals,
 On whom lank hunger lays her skinny hand, 650
 And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings.
 As if diseases, massacres, and poison,

VARIATIONS.

648. But ah! 'tis otherwise; thou gap'st for more,
 Like one that is defrauded of his meals.

651. And gives the keenest edge unto his cravings.

Famine, and war, were not thy caterers.

But know, that thou must render up the dead,
And with high int'rest too.—They are not thine,
But only in thy keeping for a season,
Till the great promis'd day of restitution ;
When loud diffusive sound from brazen trump
Of strong-lung'd cherub, shall alarm thy captives,
And rouse the long, long sleepers into life, 660
Day-light, and liberty.—

Then must thy doors fly open, and reveal
The mines that lay long forming under ground,
In their dark cells immur'd ; but now full ripe,
And pure as silver from the crucible,
That twice has stood the torture of the fire,
And inquisition of the forge.—We know
Th' illustrious Deliverer of mankind,
The Son of God thee foil'd.—Him in thy power
Thou could'st not hold :---self-vigorous he rose,
And, shaking off thy fetters, soon retook 671
Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent :

VARIATION.

672. Those spoils that were but thine by his tame
yielding.

(Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall !)
 Twice twenty days he sojourned here on earth,
 And show'd himself alive to chosen witnesses,
 By proofs so strong, that the most slow assenting
 Had not a scruple left.—This having done,
 He mounted up to heaven.—Methinks I see him
 Climb the aerial heights, and glide along 679
 Athwart the severing clouds : but the faint eye,
 Flung backwards in the chase, soon drops its hold ;
 Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.
 Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in ;
 Nor are his friends shut out : As a great prince
 Not for himself alone procures admision,
 But for his train.—It was his royal will,
 That where he is, there should his followers be,
 Death only lies between.—A gloomy path !
 Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears :

 VARIATIONS.

679. ————— and with great steps
 Stride o'er the pillar clouds. But, &c.
 683. Heaven's gates are strait unbarr'd to let him in,
 685. Not only for himself procures admision,
 But for his train : so he. It was his will, &c.

But nor untrod, nor tedious : the fatigue 690
 Will soon go off.—Besides, there's no bye-road
 To bliss.—Then, why, like ill-condition'd children,
 Start we at transient hardships in the way
 That leads to purer air, and softer skies,
 And a ne'er-setting sun?—Fools that we are!
 We wish to be, where sweets unwith'ring bloom;
 But strait our wish revoke, and will not go.
 So have I seen, upon a summer's ev'n,
 Fast by the riv'let's brink, a youngster play:
 How wishfully he looks to stem the tide! 700
 This moment resolute, next unresolv'd:
 At last he dips his foot; but as he dips,
 His fears redouble, and he runs away
 From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now
 Of all the flow'rs that paint the further bank,
 And smil'd so sweet of late.—Thrice welcome
 death!

 VARIATION.

704. ———— unmindful more
 Of all the daies on the further bank,
 Of late that smil'd so sweet. Thrice welcome
 death! &c.

That after many a painful bleeding step
 Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe
 On the long-wish'd-for shore.—Prodigious change!
 Our bane turn'd to a blessing!—Death disarm'd,
 Loses its fellness quite.—All thanks to him 711
 Who scourg'd the venom out.—Sure the last end
 Of the good man is peace!—How calm his exit!
 Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
 Nor weary worn out winds expire so soft,
 Behold him in the evening tide of life,
 A life well-spent, whose early care it was
 His riper years should not upbraid his green :
 By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away ;
 Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting. 720
 (High in his faith and hopes) look how he reaches
 After the prize in view ! and, like a bird
 That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away :
 Whilst the glad gates of fight are wide expanded
 To let new glories in, the first fair fruits

 VARIATION.

720. ————— seems larger as he sets.

724. Whilst the glad gates of fight are stretched
 wide.

Of the fast coming harvest.—Then, oh then !
 Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
 Shrunk to a thing of nought.—Oh ! how he longs
 To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd !
 'Tis done ! and now he's happy !—the glad soul
 Has not a wish uncrown'd.—Ev'n the lag flesh 731
 Rests too in hope of meeting once again
 Its better half, never to sunder more.
 Nor shall it hope in vain :—The time draws on
 When not a single spot of burial earth,
 Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,
 But must give back its long-committed dust
 Inviolat :—and faithfully shall these
 Make up the full account ; not the least atom
 Embezzl'd, or mislaid, of the whole tale. 740
 Each soul shall have a body ready furnish'd ;
 And each shall have his own.—Hence, ye profane !
 Ask not, how this can be ?—Sure the same pow'r
 That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,
 Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts,
 And put them as they were.—Almighty God
 Has done much more : nor is his arm impair'd
 Through length of days : and what he can, he will :
 His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.

When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring
dust, 750

(Not unattentive to the call) shall wake :
And ev'ry joint possess its proper place,
With a new elegance of form, unknown
To its first state.—Nor shall the conscious soul
Mistake its partner, but amidst the crowd
Singling its other half, into its arms
Shall rush with all th' impatience of a man
That's new come home, and, having long been
absent,

With haste runs over ev'ry different room, 759
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!
Nor time, nor death, shall ever part them more.
'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night ;
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.

Thus, at the shut of ev'n, the weary bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Cov'rs down, and dozes till the dawn of day ;
Then claps his well-fledg'd wings, and bears away.

VARIATION.

765. On window-sole, or foot-stain'd chimney-top,

A P O E M,

Dedicated to the Memory of the Late Learned and Eminent

MR. WILLIAM LAW,

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

IN silence to suppress my griefs I've try'd,
And keep within its banks the swelling tide ;
But all in vain : unbidden numbers flow ;
Spite of myself, my sorrows vocal grow,
This be my plea.—Nor thou, dear shade, refuse
The well-meant tribute of the willing muse,
Who trembles at the greatness of its theme,
And fain would say what suits so high a name.

Which, from the crowded journal of thy fame,
Which of thy many titles shall I name?
For, like a gallant prince, that wins a crown,
By undisputed right before his own,

Variety thou hast : our only care
Is what to single out, and what forbear.

Though scrupulously just, yet not severe ;
Though cautious, open ; courteous, yet sincere ;
Though rev'rend, yet not magisterial ;
Though intimate with few, yet lov'd by all ;
Though deeply read, yet absolutely free
From all the stiffnesses of pedantry :
Though circumspectly good, yet never sour ;
Pleasant with innocence, and never more.
Religion worn by thee, attractive shew'd,
And with its own unborrow'd beauty glow'd :
Unlike the bigot, from whose watery eyes
Ne'er sunshine broke, nor smile was seen to rise ;
Whose sickly goodness lives upon grimace,
And pleads a merit from a blubber'd face.
Thou kept thy raiment for the needy poor,
And taught the fatherless to know thy door ;
From griping hunger set the needy free ;
That they were needy was enough to thee.

Thy fame to please, whilst others restless be,
Fame laid her shyness by, and courted thee ;
And though thou bade the flatt'ring thing give o'er,
Yet, in return, she only woo'd thee more.

How sweet thy accents ! and how mild thy
look !

What smiling mirth was heard in all thou spoke !
Manhood and grizzled age were fond of thee,
And youth itself sought thy society.

The ag'd thou taught, descended to the young,
Clear'd up th' irresolute, confirm'd the strong ;
To the perplex'd thy friendly counsel lent,
And gently lifted up the diffident ;

Sigh'd with the sorrowful, and bore a part
In all the anguish of a bleeding heart :

Reclaim'd the headstrong, and with sacred skill,
Committed hallow'd rapes upon the will ;

Sooth'd our affections, and, with their delight,
To gain our actions, brib'd our appetite.

Now who shall, with a greatness like thy
own,

Thy pulpit dignify, and grace thy gown ?

Who with pathetic energy like thine,

The head enlighten, and the heart refine !

Learn'd were thy lectures, noble the design,

The language *Roman*, and the action fine ;

The heads well rang'd, the inferences clear,

And strong and solid thy deductions were :

Thou mark'd the bound'ries out 'twixt right and
wrong,

And show'd the land-marks as thou went along.

Plain were thy reasonings, or if perplext

Thy life was the best comment on thy text ;

For if in darker points we were deceiv'd,

'Twas only but observing how thou liv'd.

Bewilder'd in the greatness of thy fame,

What shall the muse, what next in order name ?

Which of thy social qualities commend ?

Whether of husband, father, or of friend !

A husband soft, beneficent and kind,

As ever virgin wish'd, or wife could find ;

A father indefatigably true

To both a father's trust and tutor's too.

A friend affectionate and staunch to those

Thou wisely singled out ; for few thou chose ;

Few, did I say, that word we must recal,

A friend, a willing friend thou wast to all.

Those properties were thine, nor could we know

Which rose the uppermost, so all was thou.

So have I seen the many-colour'd mead,

Brush'd by the vernal breeze, its fragrance shed :

Though various sweets the various field exhal'd,
Yet could we not determine which prevail'd,
Nor this part *rose*, that *boney-suckle*, call,
But a rich bloomy aggregate of all.

And, thou, the once glad partner of his bed,
But now by sorrow's weeds distinguished,
Whose busy memory thy grief supplies,
And calls up all thy husband to thine eyes,
Thou must not be forgot. How alter'd now!
How thick thy tears! How fast thy sorrows flow!
The well known voice that cheer'd thee heretofore,

These soothing accents, thou must hear no more.
Untold be all the tender sighs thou drew,
When on thy cheek he fetch'd a long adieu.
Untold be all thy faithful agonies,
At the last anguish of his closing eyes:
For thou, and only such as thou, can tell
The killing anguish of a last farewell.

This earth, yon sun, and these blue-tinctur'd
skies,
Through which it rolls, must have their obsequies:
Pluck'd from their orbits, shall the planets fall,
And smoke and conflagration cover all:

What then is man? The creature of a day.
By moments spent, and minutes borne away,
Time, like a raging torrent, hurries on;
Scarce can we say *it is*, but that 'tis gone.

Whether, fair shade! with social spirits, tell,
(Whose properties thou once describ'd so well),
Familiar now thou hearest them relate
The rites and methods of their happy state;
Or if, with forms more fleet, thou roams abroad,
And views the great magnificence of God,
Points out the courses of the orbs on high,
And counts the silver wonders of the sky;
Or if, with glowing seraphim, thou greets [streets,
Heaven's King, and shoutest through the golden
That crowds of white-rob'd choristers display,
Marching in triumph through the pearly way?

Now art thou rais'd beyond this world of cares,
This weary wilderness, this vale of tears,
Forgetting all thy toils and labours past,
No gloom of sorrow stains thy peaceful breast.
Now 'midst seraphic splendours shalt thou dwell,
And be what only these pure forms can tell.
How cloudless now, and cheerful is the day!
What joys, what raptures, in thy bosom play!

How bright the sunshine, and how pure the air !

There's no difficulty of breathing there.

With willing steps, a pilgrim at thy shrine,
To dew it with my tears the task be mine ;
In lonely dirge, to murmur o'er thy urn,
And with new-gather'd flowers thy turf adorn :
Nor shall thy image from thy bosom part,
No force shall rip thee from my bleeding heart ;
Oft shall I think on all I've left in thee,
Nor shall oblivion blot thy memory :
But grateful love its energy express
(The father's gone) now to the fatherless.

FINIS.

How bright the lightning as I saw you the night
There's no shadow of darkness there
With which I got a glimpse at thy light
To draw I will my tears the tide be mine;
In lonely things, to measure out thy pain,
And with new griefs I'll weave thy last design;
Nor shall thy image from my bosom part
No force shall this: that I can my bloodstain;
On earth I think on all I feel in thee;
Nor shall oblivion blot my memory;
But grateful love its every effort
(The father's gaze) now to the Father's throne

FINIS

